



The MINUTEMAN

Official Newsletter of the Minuteman Repeater Association

Volume 17, Number 2

October 1988



President's Column

Ralph McNall
WB2DCL

RENEW! RENEW! RENEW!

Yes, I know, we haven't sent out dues bills, and it may have been a mistake. But, I am hoping the \$150 it would have cost us to do a separate mailing of bills can be better spent elsewhere. So, please renew now if you haven't already done so.

New Dues Rates Approved

If you renewed before the September meeting at the old rates of \$20 for individuals and \$30 for families, you're not paid up. The by-laws state that the membership at the September meeting gets to set the dues for the coming year, and they unanimously approved the board's request for an increase to \$25 and \$35 respectively. So a few of you that renewed early (and thank you for doing so!) still owe \$5.

New Dues Rate for Novices

At the September meeting the membership also recommended and approved a new dues rate of \$10 for first year Novice memberships, as they only have use of our two 220 MHz repeaters. However, this membership rate only applies for their first year as an MMRA member. We hope this will provide both an incentive for Novices to get involved with the MMRA and equally important, to upgrade. Also approved was a special rate of \$5 for any Novices joining at the Boxboro convention, where several did join.

Handicapped Members

Two other possible classes of membership continue to be brought up. One is students and the other is the handicapped. With respect to handicapped hams ("handi-hams"), I am recommending that any member that knows of someone who is handicapped that could benefit from

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THE MMRA PRESENTS:

A Traveling Slide Show

Thursday, November 10 Milford, Massachusetts

Due to extensive lobbying by your Newsletter Editor [See—you CAN make a difference!—Ed.] and others, the next MMRA general meeting will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church in Milford at 8:00 pm. Hopefully, this will be a convenient location for those of you living in the Metrowest area.

The main attraction of this meeting will be a whirlwind tour of the many MMRA repeater sites, via slide show. Narration will be provided by WB2DCL, Ralph. Of course, no such tour would be complete without a thorough discussion of the equipment involved, so bring your suggestions! In addition, feel free to bring any surplus gear that might be useful in upgrading any of our sites.

There will be the usual fare of coffee and donuts, and the raffle will feature a prize which is sure to make you the envy of all your fellow hams. In addition, a copy of the latest edition of the ARRL Repeater Directory will be given away.

Don't miss this chance to meet your "on-the-air" friends personally!

The church does not allow smoking in the upper parish hall meeting room we will be using.

Trinity Episcopal Church is located in the center of Milford, MA, at the corner of Exchange and Congress St. Milford is approximately 10 miles south of the Mass Pike on I-495. From 495 take either the Rt. 85 South or Rt. 109 West exits to Rt. 16 West, Main St. Go past Exchange St. and turn right on Park St. and right again on Congress to get back to Exchange. Parking is along Congress or Exchange Streets. Talk in will be on the 146.61 Marlboro repeater.

IMPORTANT

Note that this date, Thursday, November 10, is a change from the date listed in the September Minuteman meetings list.

December 6 Meeting to be held in Quincy

The December 6 MMRA meeting will be held in Quincy, MA at the Quincy Covenant Congregational Church at 8:00 PM.

The church is located at the corner of Whitwell and Granite Ave., across from Grossman's, in Quincy Center. From 128 South or the Southeast Exp. take Rt. 3 South and immediately take Exit 18, "Washington St., T-Station, and Quincy Center". Follow all the signs that say "Quincy Center" and go straight through the first traffic light to the 4th light on Burgin Parkway. At the 4th light take a Left onto the Granite Connector and go one block to the end and turn right (at light). At the next light take a left go 100 feet and take another left into Covenant Congregational Church parking lot.

Talk-in will be on the 146.67 Quincy repeater.

The center of attention will once again be our President, Ralph, presenting an encore performance of his by-then-famous whirlwind tour of MMRA repeater sites. This will be your chance to ask all of the questions that you didn't think of at the November meeting! Since the program is the same, everyone will have two chances to see it, and become truly informed about the repeaters that we sometimes take for granted.

This is also a "no smoking" meeting, at the request of the folks that own the place.

For more information, please contact Tom Holmes, WA1ZID at 617-961-3156

From the Editor

First, I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Alan Medsker, my call is WB0SQR, and I am your new newsletter Editor. Since I'm new at this, I would like to ask you all to 1) Bear with me, 2) Help me by submitting material for newsletters and 3) let me know what you would like to see in the *Minuteman*. I would especially appreciate it if you could let me know if there is some way that I can make the *Minuteman* more enjoyable, informative or useful for you.

Since I'm also fairly new to the MMRA, I'm looking forward to meeting all of you at some time or another. Until then, 73 and may God bless.

Alan
WB0SQR

President's Column

(continued from page 1)

membership in the MMRA and that cannot afford to join be recommended for a complementary membership. This can be done by submitting a written petition to the MMRA board of directors.

Student Members

I and a number of other members have expressed a desire to see a special membership class for student members. Others have stated that "if they can afford to buy a case of beer they can afford our regular membership dues." Well, maybe some can, but that's no incentive for them to join. And I don't know of any that have joined other than as a family member.

This is more our loss than theirs. In particular, as busy as many students are, it's frequently much easier to get them enthusiastically involved in supporting club activities than it is most of the older adult members. This is especially true if their transportation needs can be met. Accordingly, I am once again suggesting we establish a new membership class for full-time students. The dues rate to be the same as for new novice members. However, unlike the novice membership rate which is not renewable, student memberships would be renewable as long as the student worked on at least one MMRA activity during the preceeding year.

Another way of looking at this is you can't lose money you don't and wouldn't have anyway. And not only the MMRA but Amateur Radio in general could benefit from getting students involved in our organization and its activities. What do other members think?

Phone-Patch Access Codes to Change

Although I hope this isn't your only incentive to renew, we will be changing the phone-patch access codes by the end of November. I cannot overemphasize your responsibility as a member to maintain the security of these codes.

As all members receive the codes there should be no reason for any member to ever give the codes to any one else. And NEVER, but NEVER mention the codes over the air. Doing so could result in hundreds of dollars in direct and indirect costs to the MMRA.

At the same time I would like to emphasize that all MMRA repeaters are OPEN for ALL hams to use as long as they do so in a responsible fashion. And that members are encouraged to support the emergency communication needs of non-members.

Just a reminder that you need to use 617 and 508 area codes whenever dialing outside the area code in which the repeater is located.

Budget Approved

After some discussion, primarily about the lack of details about last years' expenditures, the members at the September meeting approved without any objections the budget as proposed with the exception of the \$500 proposed for complementary membership badges. Our treasurer, Bob Fraser, K1PBL, has agreed to provide a more detailed summary of last years' expenditures in the next newsletter. A summary of expenditures submitted by Bob to the board in May was not included in the September newsletter because it wasn't compatible with the detailed breakout I used for this years' budget.

Membership Badges

As acting chair for Fund Raising, Bob Fraser, K1PBL, suggested we sell membership badges as a way to raise additional funds. In any case, if we are going to make membership badges available we need someone to be responsible for them.

Nominating Committee

You may have noticed in the last MINUTEMAN newsletter that the first committee listed was the "Nominating" committee, with all three positions open. Well, I've managed to fill one of those positions. Bob Fraser, K1PBL, has agreed to be a member of the nominating committee as he will not be a candidate for MMRA Treasurer next May.

I was hoping to coerce Salty, K1IAO, as past president to be the chair. However, now that his wife is also retired, he will be

away most of the year. So I still need a chair and hopefully at least one additional member. Please see the article "We need you", elsewhere in this newsletter, for additional details.

Letting By-Laws be By-Laws

The By-Laws of the MMRA, which are the rules by which we must run the organization, are in need of some updating. This is to make them more in line with the structure and needs of the Association. If you have any comments or suggestions, don't be shy—your input is always welcome. These things can be directed to any of the officers, brought up at a meeting or written down and sent to the MMRA P.O. Box 2282. Of course, all changes need to be voted on by MMRA members.

Why not dig out your copy and refresh your memory before the next meeting?

Repeater Trustees Needed

The 146.67 Quincy and the 146.715 Stoneham repeaters are in need of permanent trustees. If you would enjoy hearing your call in CW at all hours of the day and night or for other reasons would enjoy serving as a repeater trustee, please contact Ralph, WB2DCL at 508-366-2404.

One Man's Trash

One Man's Trash is a new area of the *Minuteman*, dedicated to the buying, selling and trading of ham (and related) equipment by MMRA members. Please forgive the gender-specific notation ("One Person's Trash" just didn't sound right!). If you have submissions, please forward them to the Editor.

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508-366-2404
Vice President Andrew L. Morrison, N1BHI
Secretary Frank P. Morrison, KB1FZ
Treasurer Robert M. Fraser, K1PBL
Clerk Barrie Brozenske, K3BUZ
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Scott R. Bullock, KA1CLX
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Boxboro ARRL Convention

Boxboro's over, thank goodness, and for those of you that didn't make it you missed a zoo on Saturday and a chance to relax on Sunday. Boy, was it quiet on Sunday. You could actually enjoy the exhibit hall. Unfortunately, the flea market was just as dead. As far as the raffles go it was status quo; I didn't win anything. However, Frank, KB1FZ, did manage to come away with a mobile antenna. And Andy, N1BHI, figured he couldn't loose when he got a small prize drawing ticket with the same number as his registration ticket. But that's all he got.

Kudos

First, I certainly want to thank Scott, KA1CLX, for all he did in support of our participation at Boxboro, especially getting the on-site 146.67 repeater set up and running. Also, everyone who helped with talk in, but especially Andy, N1BHI, for the many and early morning hours he put in.

Second, I want to thank every one who helped out with parking, but especially Barrie, K3BUZ, for his last minute efforts that brought order to an otherwise unorganized mess.

Finally, I want to thank all those who helped me with the Membership table. There's even a rumor of a "Draw the beard on our President" contest attracting much attention [See your enclosed MMRA flyer - Ed.]. In any case we signed up 16 new members, including three Novices and one two member family, and had 19 renewals. That brought our total "paid up" for '89 to 109.

I would like to have included here the names and calls of all those who worked at Boxboro, but Barrie has the only list. And besides the fact that it's probably incomplete, Barrie got sick after Boxboro and wasn't able to get the list to me. They're blaming it on my coffee! I'm more inclined to believe the food, which I didn't eat. In any case, if you worked at Boxboro, make sure you are on the list so we have a record.

Flyer Notes - Apologies

Please note that the MMRA flyer distributed at Boxboro requires a couple of changes. My apologies to Dave Unkles, KC2LT, for having listed his 448.275 Manchester, NH repeater with KA1CLX's call. Dave's 448.275 machine is not an MMRA repeater. However, Scott, KA1CLX, was working on linking it to our 449.925 repeater in Marlboro. And I somehow came to believe it would

have his call on it. Well, not only doesn't it have Scott's call on it but they have subsequently decided to make it part of the "World Network" rather than link it to 449.925. As such I believe the access PL will be 88.5 Hz, not 123.0 Hz. Again, my deepest apologies to Dave. I look forward to using his machine as part of the World Network.

P.S. I also apologize to Scott for our 449.925 repeater being listed as 449.50 on the membership application flyer. However, this time it wasn't my fault.

MMRA Information Net

The MMRA Info Net was kicked off earlier this month, but not without being inadvertently delayed one week. Originally scheduled for October 3, the first Net was conducted on October 10 by Ralph McNall, WB2DCL, net control. As might be expected with a brand-new net, there weren't many participants. There were four checkins (KA1JXH, WIJDO, WA1DFL and WB0SQR), and a good time was had by all.

The purpose of the net is to keep MMRA members (and other interested hams) informed about MMRA activities, and to provide an opportunity to disseminate information of general interest.

The MMRA Info Net is held each Monday at 19:15 EDT and rotates around to various MMRA repeaters. When all the links are in place, the net will be held on all repeaters simultaneously (can you help us achieve this???). The schedule of repeaters is listed on the MMRA flyer, enclosed with this newsletter.

Prior to starting the net the net control operator will sign on to each of the other MMRA 2-meter repeaters to announce what repeater the net will be taking place on. As Ralph does not have 220 MHz equipment he will not be able to hold the net on our two 220 MHz machines. This is one reason why he would like others to get involved in running this net. We would especially appreciate it if you could help us establish a temporary cross-band link between two or more of our repeaters.

More Batteries Assaulted!!!

Well, actually, they were just kidnapped. Ralph McNall, WB2DCL managed to procure four more sets of 6V (40 Ahr this time) batteries. Once put into place, these will help provide emergency battery backup for the Marlboro, Weston and Quincy repeaters. Once again, thanks to Ross, N0GSZ for his help here.

We need YOU!

As you remember from the last *Minuteman*, there are many positions in many committees to be filled. Listed below are descriptions of a few of the available positions. Please take a moment to dig out that issue and check out the Committee List again, and consider volunteering if you haven't already!

Nominating Committee

We still need a two people to fill empty slots in our nominating committee. This committee is responsible for coming up with a slate of candidates for the next election of MMRA officers and staff. This is your chance to flatter your fellow MMRA members by nominating them for a position! And it's never too early to start lining up candidates for the next election. Any volunteers to chair the 1990 nominating committee?

Member Activities Committee

There are SIX open position of various sorts on this committee. The ones that I would like to highlight this month is the Refreshments and Raffles positions. To quote from The Link, the newsletter from the Buffalo (NY) Amateur Radio Repeater Association, the refreshment person (or people) should:

"Provide coffee and donuts at the general meetings. Your duties would be to bring the coffee, tea, cream, pop [sic] & supplies to the meeting, set it up, make a pot of coffee, make hot water for tea and pick up the supplies and clean up the area. As the supplies are used, money is available for you to replace them."

The raffles person is in charge of procuring an item or items to be raffled off at an MMRA event. In addition, there is a raffle tickets person, or this could be handled by the same person. Actually, these sound like fun.

There are four other open positions on this committee: Meeting Programs Coordinator, Feb. Stoneham Meeting Coordinator, Christmas Party Coordinator, and Appreciation Banquet Coordinator.

There are other positions available! Again, please look over the MMRA Committee page in the September *Minuteman*, and pick an area of service.

Meeting Schedules for Other Amateur Radio Clubs

Middlesex Amateur Radio Club

4th Thursday of each month

(except Nov/Dec)

Contact Justin Lee Altshuler, W1TYY

Repeater Reports

While I've received numerous verbal reports on each of the repeaters from their trustees, trying to get written reports out of them for the news letters is like pulling teeth. Therefore, rather than say nothing about each of them I will call on my memory. And in the process probably say some outrageous things for which I will take credit but they get any blame.

146.61 Marlboro Repeater

The .61 repeater was the distraction that helped me forget to MMRA Information Net on October 3rd. Shortly after 5pm the repeater started sending "ALM" in CW. If you ever hear this, it means the alarm circuit at the repeater site has been tripped. If at all possible the repeater trustee should be notified immediately. If this isn't possible and you know where the repeater is located you should notify the local police (although preferably not over the air as I did).

In this case we were lucky that Woody, K1KTW, was nearby and willing to drive up to the site in time to scare off whoever was trying to break in. I suspect some local kids. While they did not get inside they did get the locks off.

As Andy was nowhere to be found, Scott, KA1CLX, had to take time out from his move to Framingham (we no longer have a member in Worcester!), to replace the latches and locks that evening. I want to thank Scott and Frank, KB1FZ, who also helped.

Because this is at least the third break-in attempt in two years, Scott would like to put up some chain link fence, preferably with razor wire on top, to discourage future attempts. If you know of an inexpensive (like free) source and/or would be willing, and able, to help install it please give Scott a call. I was thinking an official looking "Danger, High Voltage, Keep Out" sign on the door wouldn't hurt either.

On a more positive note, this past summer Scott was able to convince Cel-wave to replace .61's one year old Super Station Master at no cost too us. With the assistance of the Marlboro Fire Department Scott was able to install the new antenna without a hitch until his tool pouch got hitched, pun intended, to the ladder and dumped all his tools on the ground. If someone has a metal detector there was a good 50 ohm dummy load and several other tools that were never found.

The fact that the problems with the old .61 antenna showed up at the same time as normal spring time foliage attenuation

started to appear caused the initial confusion in recognizing that there was a problem. With the new antenna the repeater is back to full sensitivity at full power out. Now, if we can just get the phone-patch converted to half duplex so I can hear my wife when I call her.

Our Grand Plan

If some of you wonder where I get my ideas from, some are the result of my having been a member of the Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Association (BARRA) before moving to New England. Their first 2-meter repeater is in my home town, Boston, NY. And it had a 450 MHz link to their second 2-meter repeater as well as one to a Toronto repeater. I can even remember when it had an open phone-patch (*-UP/#-Down). Probably the reason I had a difficult time adjusting to using * to take our phone patches down. The MMRA information net I recently started is also something BARRA and other clubs have been doing for some time.

The reason I am drawing on these ideas is because in many ways and for many reasons the MMRA is not as attractive an organization as it could and should be. I believe one way to make it more attractive to new and past members is by making it a more dynamic organization. An organization second to none in its ability to establish and maintain the best repeater based communication capability in the area in support of both member and public service needs! I firmly believe that the capabilities of the MMRA and its seven repeaters are significantly less than what they could be given the synergy that could result from an ability to selectively link all of them together.

Clearly such links would have to be controllable as there are many times when you would not want them all linked together. On the other hand it sure would be nice to be able to hold the MMRA Information Net on all the repeaters at the same time rather than rotating between

just those repeaters I can access. Or increasing the probability that I can find someone to talk to while driving home late at night. I suspect there may even be emergency communication situations where you might want to have all of them linked together at one time.

Anyway, this is the foundation for my push to be able to selectively link all of our repeaters together. But the extent to which it happens is largely dependent on members getting involved to make it happen. While we will certainly need additional equipment to implement all the links, the first thing we need is your involvement. If you are interested in getting involved please contact either myself, WB2DCL, or Scott Bullock, KA1CLX.

MMRA Flea Market, Saturday Jan. 14, 1989, Westboro High School

The next MMRA Flea Market will be held on January 14, 1989 at the Westboro Senior High School in Westboro, MA. General admission is at 10 am. Doors will be open to sellers at 8:30 am.

The Westboro Senior High School is on Route 30, 1.8 miles south of Route 9.

Volunteers Needed

We need volunteers to help set up, park, run talk-in, etc. in order to pull this off. This is OUR gig, and many hands make light work. If everyone donates a couple of hours of their time, everyone will have a chance to have a good time.

A setup crew is needed at 7:00 pm Friday, Jan. 13, and other volunteers are needed starting at 8:00 am Saturday. If you would like to help (or even if you wouldn't like, but are willing), contact Andy Morrison, N1BHI, or Scott Bullock, KA1CLX.

New England Packet Radio Association
2nd Thursday of each month
Honeywell-Bull Plant
Concord Road, Billerica

Meetings for the 1988-1989 Season

— 1988 —

Thu, Nov. 10	Milford	MMRA: past, present, and future
Tue, Dec. 06	Quincy	MMRA: past, present, and future (Encore)

— 1989 —

Sat, Jan. 14	Westboro	Flea Market
Tue, Feb. 28	Stoneham	Stoneham Repeater
Wed, Apr. 12		Marlboro/Hopkinton Repeaters
Thu, May, 25	Weston	Elections & . . .
Sat/Sun in Jul or Aug	TBD	Picnic (& Mobile/Portable Equipment Clinic)